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## Climate bill jockeying continues over undecideds' votes

By Jon H. Harsch

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One certainty about the American Clean Energy & Security Act is that Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) will only bring it to a vote on the House floor tomorrow if passage is certain. That's why the vote could be delayed until Saturday or even next week, and why the House Democratic leadership and the White House were working feverishly Thursday to convince undecided members of both parties to support the comprehensive climate-change and energy bill.

This arm-twisting work has turned out to be tougher than anticipated. The man who led a 50-member revolt against the Waxman/Markey bill as reported out by the House Energy and Commerce Committee is House Agriculture Committee Chair Collin Peterson (D-MN). The revolt appeared to be over when Peterson announced his support for the bill on Wednesday after protracted negotiations with House Energy and Commerce Committee Chair Henry Waxman (D-CA) and a key House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee Chair, Ed Markey (D-MA). (To read the Peterson amendment produced by the negotiators, go to <http://www.agri-pulse.com/uploaded/20090625H.pdf>). But Peterson's support for the bill hasn't been enough to convince all Ag Committee members or rural members to switch their own votes.

A sign of the complex situation is that American Farm Bureau Federation Public Policy Director Mary Kay Thatcher explains that Farm Bureau supports the Peterson amendment – but still would not support passage of the complete climate/energy bill even if it includes the Peterson amendment. Thatcher told *Agri-Pulse* that “It is simply not enough for us. . . We're all for a leadership role for the U.S. but we don't think going in, when other countries that are as important to exports as China and India are saying they're not going to do it, makes any sense. Because we think it will make farmers here less competitive. And we have concerns about cost-of-production increases and there are a lot of sectors in agriculture such as fruits and vegetables which have practically no way of being able to benefit by this bill because they have to plow up their land every year, and the animal sector has problems. So we just don't think that the idea of this type of a climate change bill is good and we're going to oppose final passage. We're incredibly thankful to Collin Peterson and to the Blue Dogs and the House Ag Committee Democrats who have done a lot of work to make the bill significantly better, but we still oppose final passage.”

One U.S. Department of Agriculture official familiar with the Peterson/Waxman negotiations explains that some House Democrats are not being asked to vote for the bill because they represent conservative districts. In these cases, voting for the climate bill would simply guarantee the loss of the district to a Republican in next year's elections. Other Democratic members, however, are being lobbied hard by fellow members, by the White House, and by various interest groups.

One Republican member of the House said that the lobbying for votes includes ongoing negotiations which could result in further changes affecting woody biomass and other areas as the Democrats struggle to secure more votes.

Meanwhile, the Ranking Member of the House Energy & Commerce Committee, Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX), was busy Thursday trying to peel votes away from the bill. In a Thursday press conference, he released a letter he sent to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson and copied to Energy & Commerce Committee Chair Waxman. Barton is known for his skepticism about global warming and his refusal to accept that if global warming is taking place, that it is human-caused. In his letter to Jackson, Barton charges that there are "serious questions about the integrity, transparency and completeness of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) rulemaking process for the agency's proposed finding that carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases endanger public health and welfare."

Charging EPA with "possible suppression of science," Barton says that he has "reason to believe that EPA staff raised concerns that research supporting the endangerment finding ignored a number of recent scientific developments on declining global temperatures; emerging evidence that hurricanes may not be affected by greenhouse gases; new data on the Greenland ice sheet; and new research about ocean cycles and solar cycles." Barton goes on to say that the EPA's possible attempt to suppress information which could undermine the case for its recent endangerment finding "relates directly to the rush to vote on Waxman-Markey."